

# Postcolonial Englishes moving towards/past endonormativity: A Survey of Literature on Attitudes and Implications

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## Abstract

In each postcolonial multilingual environment, a nativised and standardising variety of English is often used in the educational system, administration, and media, instead of Standard British English (SBE). Research shows that teachers find it challenging to teach SBE effectively, and learners consistently struggle to acquire its features. Despite these findings, educational authorities in these countries continue the steadfast promotion of SBE. This approach hinders the opportunity to embrace flexible language ideologies that could foster the development of local varieties of English and encourage their acceptance as valid models for the classroom. In this article, I review the literature on attitudes towards postcolonial nativised Englishes and argue that adopting these Englishes as local standards would have significant positive implications for the local English language teaching industries at sociolinguistic, pedagogic, economic, and policy levels.

**Keywords:** postcolonial nativised Englishes; endonormativity; attitudes; implications; policy; Africa.

## Introduction

Postcolonial nativized Englishes (PNE) are varieties of English that have developed as a result of the interaction between English, the language of British colonisers, and local languages in Africa and Asia (Schneider, 2007). These English varieties, such as Nigerian English, Indian English, Singaporean English and Ghanaian English, have gained official or semi-official language status in their respective regions. They differ from the Englishes used in Inner Circle (IC) countries, such as Standard British English (SBE) and American English (AmE), in terms of phonology, grammar, vocabulary, and pragmatics. PNE are also distinct from non-Inner Circle Englishes (NICE), like Chinese English and German English, which are learned through formal education but are not widely used in the media and administration in China and Germany respectively. While the birth of NICE happened because of contact between IC varieties and speakers of other languages in a specific territory or region, the development of these Englishes is largely dependent today on interactions among speakers of English in the country or region. In other words, while there was a



quasi-unidirectional influence of SBE on Ugandan English speech some fifty years ago, Ugandan English is today primarily influenced by Luganda and Luo speakers of Ugandan English, Kenyan English, Indian English and Nigerian English, than it is by speakers of SBE (see Meierkord, 2022). While all NICE face discrimination as schools, students and parents tend to prefer IC Englishes for the classroom (Holliday, 2005; Jenkins, 2007; Zhang, 2009; Kaur, 2014), PNE tend to be more tolerated, and are seen as legitimate forms of communication and as markers of local identity (Belibi, 2022a).

Scholars in English Applied Linguistics have identified the unique phonological, semantic, and pragmatic features of PNE (Kachru, 1982; Anchimbe, 2018) that distinguish them from IC Englishes. They argue that the norms set by IC countries are impractical and unattainable in postcolonial multilingual contexts (Rajadurai, 2006; Kirkpatrick, 2007a, 2007b). Additionally, they have highlighted that NICE speakers outnumber IC speakers, leading to more English interactions worldwide involving NICE speakers (Graddol, 2006). Therefore, there is a need to focus on these varieties of English.

However, the English language teaching (ELT) industry has been significantly shaped by native speakerism, which emphasizes IC norms and native speaker teachers as essential for successful English language learning (Holliday, 2005; Quirk, 1990). Consequently, education officials in NICE contexts, including ex-British colonies, continue to promote exocentric ELT policies that pressure instructors to teach SBE despite the fact that many have a limited mastery of its features. For example, the official English language syllabi in Cameroon and Kenya prescribe SBE and Received Pronunciation as the model for teaching and learning English (see Ministry of Secondary Education, 2014, for Cameroon; and Kenya Institute of Education, 2002, for Kenya). Obviously, these ELT policies have not produced the desired results (Ngefacs, 2011 and 2010; Njoroge, 2017). Instead, recent developments in language teaching suggest a departure from monolingual and language separation ideologies (Galloway & Rose, 2018), and instead emphasise a growing recognition and acceptance of PNE in the English language classroom (Tupas, 2010). In response to this shift, some classroom teachers have started incorporating literary texts by local authors into their English language classes in an attempt to expose learners to indigenised language features and hence prepare them for variation in international communication in English. (Kachru 1986a; Thumboo & Sayson, 2007). This change in attitude towards PNE challenges traditional beliefs about English language standards and creates an opportunity for ELT stakeholders to collaborate on the standardisation of PNE. This paper will begin by discussing the development of

some PNE and then review attitudes towards these varieties of English. Finally, drawing examples from the Cameroonian, Nigerian, Ghanaian, Kenyan and Ugandan contexts, we shall explore the sociolinguistic, pedagogical, economic, and policy implications of adopting PNE as models for language learning and teaching in different postcolonial contexts.

### **Postcolonial nativised Englishes: towards African and Asian norms?**

Schneider's Dynamic Model (2003, 2007) is one of the leading frameworks in English sociolinguistics that accounts for the developmental cycle of postcolonial Englishes. It consists of five stages, with Foundation, being the first, which refers to the arrival of English in a country where the population did not use it. The second stage known as Exonormative Stabilisation is a stage where the imported variety, which Schneider calls the settler (STL) strand, is used as the norm, though it becomes gradually indigenised towards the local variety, the IDG strand, which, as a result, begins to expand. The third stage, Nativisation, is, according to Schneider (2003, p.247), "the most important, the most vibrant one, the central phase of both cultural and linguistic transformation". The identity of the new variety is established during this phase. The imported variety undergoes restructuring at the levels of lexicology, grammar, discourse, style and phonology to espouse the sociolinguistic and ecological realities of the context. Stage four is Endonormative Stabilisation. The new variety is gradually adopted and accepted as the local norm and is used in a wide range of formal situations including administration, the media, the legal system and education. "Endonormativity" as used in this work refers, therefore, to the hallmarks of this stage of Schneider's Dynamic Model (DM henceforth). Stage five, the last phase, is Differentiation. The new variety is the local model and reflects the identity and culture of its users. Local varieties emerge as a result of social differentiation among speakers of English in that context.

Concerning postcolonial Englishes in Africa, Schneider (2007, 2008) places the majority of these varieties (Nigerian English, Ghanaian English, Kenyan English and Cameroon English<sup>1</sup>, for example) in Phase 3. He argues that English has undergone significant indigenisation in all these contexts, discernible at the levels of phonology, lexis, syntax, morphology and discourse as documented in several descriptive works (Simo Bobda, 1994; Kouega, 2007 for Cameroon English;

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<sup>1</sup> As the linguistic legacy of British colonisation of Southern Cameroons, Cameroon English (see Simo Bobda, 1994 and Kouega, 2007) refers to the variety of English spoken by educated Anglophone Cameroonians. It is different from Cameroon Francophone English, a performance variety spoken by educated Francophones. In the Anglophone sub-system of education, English is the language of instruction. Meanwhile, in the Francophone sub-system, French is the medium of instruction and English is taught as a foreign language.



Bamgbose, 1992 and Jowitt, 2019 for Nigerian English; Skandera, 1999 and Buregeya, 2019 for Kenyan English; and Huber & Dako, 2008, and Ofori et al., 2014 for Ghanaian English). Also, regular complaints from educators, newspapers and government reports about the falling standards in English in these contexts indicate a purist tendency that reinforces the STL strand. Finally, Schneider argues, from a political perspective, that English and Pidgin English in certain cases have become closely associated with the identity of English-speaking Africans, and are today mother tongues for a new generation of Africans.

While scholars of African Englishes largely adhered to the DM and could agree with its author on the level of development of the various Englishes in 2007, they have since then indicated possible changes of status towards endonormativity. Huber (2012), for instance, signalled just five years after the publication of Schneider's book that Ghanaian English was between the Nativisation Phase and the Endonormative Stabilisation Phase. Meanwhile, Ngefacs (2022a) used both quantitative and qualitative data to show that, unlike the sociolinguistic and political situation that prevailed at the start of the 21st century when Schneider developed the DM, Cameroon English (CamE) has likely evolved to Phase 4, Endonormative Stabilisation. In the Nigerian context, Ugwuanyi (2022, p. 114) argued that Nigerian English "can be seen to have successfully progressed through the five stages of the DM, depending on how fluid one considers the boundaries between the phases".

Asian Englishes, however, got different fortunes in Schneider's DM. The author claimed, for example, that Malaysian English could not be said to have moved beyond the Nativisation stage (Schneider, 2003). Singaporean English, however, currently sits in Phase 4 and is moving towards Phase 5 (Schneider, 2007). Concerning the Philippines, Schneider (ibid) claimed that this variety of English was in Phase 3, and approaching Phase 4. However, Borlongan (2016, p.1) argued that, "Philippine English has already met the parameters set for phase 4, and that this phase may be dawning in the development of Philippine English". Finally, Schneider (ibid) argued that Indian English sat in Phase 3, though Mukherjee (2007) thought it was already in Phase 4.

In a nutshell, postcolonial Englishes are still growing; their current levels of development are, in most cases, in Phase 3 or, in a few cases, in Phase 4. The acceptance or rejection of these Englishes, therefore, remains a central issue in their growth towards Differentiation.

### **Attitudes towards postcolonial nativised Englishes and the need to decolonise ELT**

Attitudes towards PNE are worthy of scholarship as they inform ELT stakeholders,

including policymakers, on the level of development of these Englishes on their path to becoming local standards. These attitudes have evolved over the past four decades in tandem with discourses on decolonising ELT. In this section, the three main stances to PNE are discussed, including rejection, tolerance and neutral stances.

There is still enough evidence that English is a colonising language, and that several educational practices and approaches to ELT pedagogies are still overtly colonial (Pennycook, 1998). Indeed, linguistic imperialism permeates almost all aspects of ELT; monolingual, native speaker and language separation ideologies relegate multilingual English language learners and teachers to the background and continue to promote the acquisition of SBE as the only pathway to quality education, increased job opportunities and financial prosperity (Schreiber 2019; von Esch, Motha & Kubota 2020). Prator (1968) and Quirk (1990), proponents of purism in ELT, reject NICE, which they consider as deficient. They argue that it is heretical to use features of these Englishes in the classroom, because they could be, in reality, the hallmarks of low English standards or the failures of the educational systems of the countries in which these tongues are widely in use. Then Quirk (1990, p.19) recommends “the need for native teacher support and the need for non-native teachers to be in constant touch with the native language”. This position was not shared by the majority of scholars. Decolonisation discourses in ELT have urged scholars and teachers to move away from native speakerism and language separation ideologies. Decolonising ELT means “taking control of the principles and practices of planning, learning and teaching English” (Kumaravadivelu 2003, p. 540). This process includes “designing context-specific instructional strategies that take into account the local historical, political, social, cultural, and educational exigencies” as well as “... preparing teaching materials that are not only suited to the goals and objectives of learning and teaching in a specific context, but also responsive to the instructional strategies designed by local professionals” (Kumaravadivelu 2016, p. 81). What is described above is acceptance, seen as the act of treating— without any further questions and prejudice— NICE as equal to IC Englishes, and understanding that though the two types of Englishes are different, they all serve communicative functions within their respective contexts of use. It is unfortunate that several postcolonial Englishes have not reached that stage yet; rather, they are still fighting for tolerance or the acknowledgement of their existence, and continue to be considered by many ELT stakeholders as deficient or substandard.

World Englishes, a movement in English sociolinguistics which acknowledges that the different ecologies in which English has come to be used significantly affect its shape, became the response

to purist and imperialist ideologies in ELT. Founded by Braj Kachru, World Englishes acknowledges “the two faces of English: nativisation and Englishisation” (Kachru 1992). While the former refers to the process of a language variety developing features of a local context, the latter is the process by which local languages acquire features of the English language. Therefore, scholars who advocate the acceptance of NICE understand, among other things the following five points:

- English has multicultural identities. It was not simply transplanted in non-IC settings resulting in a uniform use (Kachru, 1985). Therefore, it is owned by all those who use it, including first, second and foreign language speakers (Crystal, 2000).
- It is unrealistic to impose IC norms in non-IC settings (Kirkpatrick, 2007a; Ngefac, 2011). Sometimes, IC norms are simply irrelevant and inappropriate in these contexts.
- The teaching and learning of English should take into account the sociopolitical and historical factors related to the language spread and use (Kachru, 1988).
- NICE are not degenerate forms of SBE. They serve communicative and educative functions in the multilingual polities where they are used. In Cameroon, classroom teachers acknowledge that CamE, rather than SBE, is the primary medium of interaction between teachers and students, and they believe that this accent contributes to students’ success in their exams (Belibi, 2022b).
- Language users from IC contexts have lost the exclusive prerogative to control the standardisation of English in non-IC settings (Kachru, 1985).

Kachru & Nelson (1996) argue that classifying English users as native, second or foreign language speakers leads to current attitudes towards varieties of English. Given that second is generally perceived as less worthy than first, there are more positive attitudes towards IC Englishes than towards NICE. Indeed, several studies (Holliday, 2005; Jenkins, 2007, 2009; Kaur, 2014; Chien, 2014; Esimaje & Nnamani, 2018; Oyebola, 2020) have shown that IC norms are still highly prioritised in non-Inner Circle contexts. In other words, NICE are hardly recognised as legitimate varieties representing their different users, although some of these varieties have been indigenised in their contexts of use (Kachru, 1986b; Mufwene, 2001; Schneider, 2007), and their users now significantly outnumber speakers of IC varieties (Crystal, 2003; Park & Wee, 2012).

English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) refers to communication in English between speakers of different mother tongues (Jenkins 2015a; Seidlhofer, 2011). Proponents of this movement (Jennifer Jenkins and Barbara Seidlhofer) argue that it is situated ideologically between rejection and acceptance of NICE. While ELF acknowledges the near impossibility for an exonormative IC



model as a valid option for language teaching and learning in multilingual contexts, it differs from WE in that it places more emphasis on interactions in the EC, which has been a neglected domain of study in World Englishes scholarship (Pakir, 2009). At the time of its inception, ELF was a fresh perspective to ELT theory, which had been dominated over the preceding decades by the divergent discourses from followers of Quirk's monolithic approach and those of Kachru's pluricentric approach. From that perspective, Rubdy & Saraceni (2006, p.8), for instance, claimed that the ELF model "liberates L2 speakers from the imposition of native speaker norms as well as the cultural baggage of World Englishes models".

While the ELF model appears as an interesting alternative to both Quirk's monolithic views and Kachru's pluricentric perspectives, it suffers, however, from criticisms coming from World Englishes and second language acquisition scholars. First, according to O'Regan (2014, p.539), ELF "has no physical presence: you cannot point to it or pick it up, neither can you exchange it". In other words, ELF is not tangible, and therefore, cannot be considered as a variety of English in its own right.

Second, scholars (Rubdy & Saraceni, 2006; Saraceni, 2008 and Park & Wee, 2014) fear that ELF's focus on norms for speakers of different background languages might be, in fact, another form of prescriptivism. Saraceni (2008, p.22), for instance, argues: "We saw ELF as an attempt to describe a one-size-fits-all model of English and it was in this sense that, to us at least, ELF did not seem, in the substance, very different from Quirk's International English". Because ELF tends to use prescriptive methods, Researchers in second language acquisition studies, including Cook (2013), have criticised ELF on grounds that it fails to consider the multilingual contexts in which English is spoken around the world, as well as the ensuing multi-competence of English language users.

From the above, there are three attitudes towards NICE: rejection, tolerance and in-between stances. These attitudes have largely evolved over the years: while rejection has become a less common attitude in scholarship, ELF was mainly adopted by scholars from IC contexts and Europe. In the meantime, tolerance has been growing towards acceptance, in the same way as NICE have moved from Nativisation to Endonormative Stabilisation on Schneider's Dynamic Model of World Englishes.

### **Implications of accepting nativised Englishes**

Accepting local English features as norms in postcolonial multilingual contexts has

important implications for the ELT industry. These are discussed below.

### ***Sociolinguistic implications***

Accepting nativised Englishes means acknowledging and humanising the different identities, socio-political and cultural contexts of use of English that significantly impact language users' oral and written communication. This involves understanding and respecting the fact that NICE users now constitute the largest English-speaking community globally, and thus, have the right to shape the English language to serve their needs (Widdowson, 1994). On this issue, Mufwene (2001, p.106) contends: "it is those who speak a language on a regular basis – and in a manner normal to themselves – who develop the norms for their communities". Consequently, users of NICE are encouraged to take pride in their speech productions, potentially leading to resistance against imposing IC norms on learners (Lowenberg, 1986). In the Cameroonian context, for example, Mbangwana (1987) demonstrated that speakers of Cameroon English often mock other Cameroonians who attempt to adopt a British accent instead of speaking with the local accent. While positive attitudes towards PNE constitute a point of satisfaction, fully embracing nativised English requires the standardisation of local varieties of English and their adoption as official models for language learning and teaching in their respective contexts. Significant progress in this direction is already underway as discussed in Section 2 above. It is now crucial to expedite the codification of these varieties of English, especially as they have become mother tongues to new generations of students in postcolonial contexts (Schneider, 2007; Ngefac, 2022b).

Accepting PNE involves granting these varieties greater prestige and changing the perception of NICE worldwide. Consequently, the dichotomy between prestigious IC varieties and sub-standard nativised varieties becomes irrelevant. Instead, other factors such as the speaker's familiarity with a particular accent, their social status, nationality, and the status of English in specific contexts play a crucial role in shaping attitudes towards different varieties of English. Additionally, using PNE as classroom models would confer more legitimacy to regional varieties of English, thereby fostering language development for regional identity and authenticity. So, whose English or Englishes, is used today or will be used in the future in the ASEAN<sup>2</sup>, ECOWAS<sup>3</sup>, SADC<sup>4</sup> or EAC<sup>5</sup> group meetings and in-group business transactions? The answer is certainly not

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<sup>2</sup> Association of South East Asia Nations

<sup>3</sup> Economic Organization of West Africa States

<sup>4</sup> Southern Africa Development Corporation

<sup>5</sup> East Africa Council



SBE. The transactional Englishes emerging from each of these blocs will gain further prestige and perhaps even confer some soft power to their main donor varieties in the region.

The acceptance of nativised Englishes has significant implications for ELT pedagogy in non-IC contexts worldwide. These significances are discussed in the following section:

### ***Pedagogical implications***

The first pedagogical issue related to the acceptance of NICE is the question of norms or standards. Should these varieties be used in the classroom? If yes, how? While ministries of education worldwide and the majority of students and teachers tend to prefer SBE and AmE (Belibi, 2022b), research has shown that these norms provide learners with unrealistic and unattainable teaching and learning goals. Seidlhofer (2005) argues, for instance, that Standard English is not easy to define, and therefore, does not constitute a realistic teaching model. She opines that “in terms of numbers of speakers and domains of use, an insistence on Standard English as the only option for all purposes is [...] difficult to justify” (Seidlhofer, 2005, p.159). Six years later, she adds: “it would be interactionally counter-productive, even patently absurd in most cases, for speakers (to strive) to adhere to ENL [English as a Native Language] linguacultural norms when no ENL speakers may even be present” (Seidlhofer, 2011, p.18). In other words, given that NICE users vastly outnumber those from IC contexts and that there are more interactions in English among members of the first group, teaching IC norms may be irrelevant in several non-IC contexts. Also, given that there are both maturational (Critical Period Hypothesis) and multilingual constraints on L2 learners’ reaching native-like proficiency, it is too simplistic to claim that teaching SBE or AmE features will result in learners’ reproduction of those same features. The implication here, therefore, is that the time is ripe, in postcolonial contexts, to adopt more flexible language ideologies and models of teaching that take into account the nativisation of English resulting from contact with the other languages present in the multilingual repertoire of learners. Starting with an expansion in the meaning of the concept of “native speaker” as model is necessary here (Smith, 2016). Given that “models of teaching and learning need [...] to reflect the sociocultural ethos of the context of teaching/learning” (Bhatt, 2001, p.543), it will be legitimate, therefore, to consider the oral and written productions of an educated user of Ghanaian English as legitimate models for the English language classroom in Ghana.

Accepting PNE equally involves moving away from strict language separation ideologies and embracing inclusive pedagogical models that acknowledge and address the code-switching, code-

mixing, translanguaging, pidgins and sociolects that arise naturally as a result of contact between English and other languages in postcolonial contexts. The significance of these linguistic phenomena and lects to pedagogy cannot be overemphasized. Firstly, code-switching, code-mixing and translanguaging take place very often in postcolonial educational contexts where English is the medium of instruction, even when such practices are discouraged by teachers and educational authorities. Secondly, in multilingual educational contexts today, knowledge construction has become more important than maintaining linguistic purity. As a result, the use of pidginised linguistic features and other sociolects— for example Camfranglais in Cameroon— for communication and learning in school premises continues to happen within school environments (Kouega, 2003).

Incorporating nativised English features into the classroom could significantly reduce the reliance on imported didactic resources and teaching methodologies that are often inappropriate for African and Asian contexts. Selecting teaching documents and tools produced by local applied linguists and teachers will not only have substantial economic benefits for the local ELT industries but also lead to the development of context-appropriate methodology and practices for optimal teaching and learning outcomes. On adopting context-appropriate ELT pedagogy, Kuchah (2013) recommends a bottom-up approach that takes into account teachers' and students' perspectives for the dissemination of good teaching practices instead of imposing imported pedagogical innovations on teachers which they would struggle to implement in classrooms. The utilisation of locally developed ELT resources and best teaching practices can aid postcolonial education systems reduce the import of teacher experts from IC settings, many of whom lack adequate teaching qualifications (Sung, 2012). A shift in the attitudes and linguistic choices of learners and teachers could have major economic implications.

### ***Economic implications***

Accepting nativised Englishes as models for language teaching implies, for postcolonial contexts, significant financial investment to promote local English standards. This investment is essential to enhance the competitiveness of the local ELT industries. Such a policy could, at first, require greater investment in the initial training and continuing professional development of teachers over a period of ten years. The goal here is to establish standards for teacher language proficiency and build public trust in local teachers. During this period, demand for native “expert” teachers may decline as parents and learners begin to have trust in the quality of local teachers. At

the same time, students and the educated elite may become more comfortable in learning and using nativised language features. The economic benefits of this policy will accrue when locally-trained teachers are trusted by college-level ESL program administrators and directors of editing houses to fill out all teaching and editing jobs available in their countries. Till that day comes, there are still about 74.4% of ELT job advertisements in EFL contexts that have the “native or native-like/near-native proficiency” qualification requirement (Selvi, 2010). Moreover, ESL program administrators in several contexts continue to use “knowledge of teaching methods” as a birthright to justify their discrimination against non-IC English teachers when recruiting new staff (Kumaravadivelu, 2003).

From another perspective, the adoption of locally-produced didactic materials containing indigenised English features could help develop further local expertise in the areas of textbook production, marketing, commercialisation, standards and certification controls. The production of reference grammars and dictionaries alongside some of the other officially recommended English language course books and literary texts is likely to enhance the competitiveness and profitability of the ELT industries in postcolonial contexts. Littlejohn (1992) and Pennycook (1994) cited in Gray (2002) showed that a great English language course book can sell over a hundred thousand copies worldwide, with British ELT course books generating up to £170 million annually. That was almost 30 years ago. The annual sales for those course books could reach 1.5 billion pounds today. Now imagine reference grammars and dictionaries of Indian, Nigerian and Singaporean varieties of English selling like hotcakes alongside reference ELT materials from IC countries in each of their respective local markets. This could be achieved through context-appropriate market segmentation initiatives implemented by policymakers.

Another area of major economic importance in ELT is high-stakes testing. Standardised tests developed by organisations such the British Council and ETS and their provision of related services (including textbooks, CDs, and preparatory classes) to learners from non-IC contexts—who aspire to obtain a privileged English-medium education in the West—will continue to dominate the global ELT market for decades to come. The main challenge for the majority of learners in postcolonial English contexts, however, is the high cost of these tests. In Cameroon, for instance, the average cost of the TOEFL exam in March 2025 is \$270, while the IELTS test costs £230. By implication, that amount ranges between half and three-fourths of the monthly salary of a newly recruited high school English teacher in public schools of several low middle-income postcolonial English countries, including Cameroon. Now imagine that millions of students in PNE



settings sometimes have to retake these tests multiple times before achieving their desired score. Interestingly, as Templer (2004) argues, no clear explanation has been given to date about how the pricing of these tests is determined. Temple also observes that “never before in the planet's history have so many of the poor spent so much to learn the language of the rich” (Templer, 2004, p.191).

Concerted efforts by test makers, educational institutions, students and education officials from NICE countries are welcomed to alleviate the economic burden of standardised tests on students, most of whom come from modest socioeconomic backgrounds. It is also honest to acknowledge the efforts made by English proficiency testing companies on fairness and equity; today, these companies offer learners greater access to free samples of TOEFL and IELTS tests and other preparation resources online compared to 15 or 20 years ago.

From the above, the economic implications of adopting PNE as local standards not only pertain to the pecuniary advantages for the ELT industries in these contexts but also raise issues of identity, fairness and equity in testing. Stakeholders in NICE settings must understand this and carve out their own niches through careful market segmentation. After all, IC countries that have so far jealously held the reins of the international ELT industry do not have any interest in opening up the industry to NICE features for obvious reasons. They cannot, therefore, be coerced into upholding more inclusive teaching and testing approaches in ELT. Schneider (2011) illustrates this point below:

Teaching and learning English is [...] big business nowadays. It is a hugely profitable battleground for dictionary producers and other publishing houses, for language schools and trainers, and for institutions like the British Council. Of course, many of the companies offering such teaching materials, tools and services are based in Inner Circle countries, notably England, so upholding the old myth that only British English is the best and the only “correct” form of the language is in their immediate interest. (pp. 224-225)

In the end, ELT policymakers in postcolonial contexts have come at a crossroads: they can either embrace the winds of change by acknowledging local varieties of English that best reflect the realities and identities of their respective contexts of use, or they can continue promoting unrealistic and irrelevant teaching models. The next section discusses, from the background of the above sociolinguistic, pedagogical and economic implications, the policy implications for recognising and accepting nativised Englishes in postcolonial multilingual settings.

## ***Policy implications***

Refusal to recognise, value and incorporate indigenous knowledge in education is a tacit perpetuation of colonial ideologies (Montoya, 2024). From that perspective, English language policy in postcolonial multilingual Africa needs to be decolonised. This assertion does not imply starting a conflict with IC Englishes or denying the necessity, for English language learners in postcolonial contexts, to master features of these Englishes for future interactions with their speakers. The policy we advocate is one of language reclamation, understood as “a larger effort by a community to claim its right to speak a language and set associated goals in response to community needs and perspectives” (Leonard, 2012, p.339). We believe, following Montoya (ibid), that it is the responsibility of a (national) community of English language users to decide on the documentation, description, standardisation and revitalisation of the variety of English they speak, based on their priorities, interests and needs. Thus, the existence and acceptance of postcolonial Englishes have multiple implications for ELT policy, particularly in the areas of language practice, language belief and language management.

Concerning language practice, it is clear that the recognition and acceptance of nativised Englishes reinforce English diglossia in postcolonial multilingual contexts. This situation legitimises the ethnolects of English that are widely used in informal communicative situations in all these contexts, alongside the mainstream local standard that is employed in each country’s educational system, administration and media. For instance, an educated Cameroonian may choose to speak his mother tongue— such as Lam’nso— along with Cameroon Pidgincreole and Nso English (ethnolect) in informal situations, but mainstream CamE accent and French at the workplace. Similarly, educated Nigerians are expected to recognise and be familiar with British and American English accents, speak an Americanised variety of Nigerian English, and often demonstrate proficiency in Standard British English and American English accents (Awonusi, 1994). Comparable English diglossic situations exist in Uganda (Schmied, 1991; Meierkord & Isingoma, 2022) and other postcolonial multilingual contexts. Here, individuals can choose to use which English variants— standard or not— they believe are more suitable to the communicative situation, regardless of whether the features of the chosen variant are intelligible to speakers of IC Englishes.

Looking at language beliefs, it is clear that PNE are currently benefitting from their recognition and tolerance in their respective contexts. Generally, these Englishes tend to be rated highly by their users on the solidarity dimension as friendlier and easier to understand than SBE and

American English (see Belibi, 2022a for Cameroon English, Oyebola, 2020 for Nigerian English). Positive attitudes towards the local accent are equally reported in Ghana (Mensah, 2023) and Kenya (Kioko & Muthwii, 2010), though SBE and AmE continue to be preferred in educational and professional settings for utilitarian reasons. Despite the persistence of native speakerism among professional users of English, there is nonetheless a widespread perception that local English is a symbol of identity and unity in postcolonial contexts. Over time, we hope that these positive beliefs will expand to include the official use of local English in a wider range of functions, including education and administration, paving the way for its institutionalisation in each context.

Concerning language management, the polymorphous nature of English must be reflected in ELT, not only in the design of syllabuses but also extend to pedagogy, testing, didactic materials and teacher training. Then, there is need for an overhaul of policies related to teaching methods, classroom practices and research in this area. On this, Kachru (1992) contends:

First, a paradigm shift in research, teaching, and application of sociolinguistic realities to the functions of English. Second, a shift from frameworks and theories which are essentially appropriate only to monolingual countries. It is indeed essential to recognize that World Englishes represent certain linguistic, cultural and pragmatic realities, and that pluralism is now an integral part of World Englishes and literatures written in Englishes. The pluralism of English must be reflected in the approaches, both theoretical and applied, we adopt for understanding this unprecedented linguistic phenomenon (p.11).

Therefore, classroom teachers should strive to incorporate into their lessons activities that enhance students' understanding of how the local variety of English varies from SBE and, if possible, from another nativised English in the immediate sub-region. The appropriate pedagogy, at least for high school students, therefore, should be contrastive, emphasising the differences that exist between SBE/American English and the home variety of English at multiple linguistic levels. Additionally, teachers should be open to teach differently, by embracing, for example, multilingual pedagogical approaches such as code-switching and translanguaging which are essential for facilitating interaction and knowledge construction in the classroom.

As far as testing is concerned, language and literature teachers should be encouraged to assess aspects of variation they have taught or discussed in class with their learners. For instance, they could have students rewrite dialogues, paragraphs or stanzas from literary texts by



British/American authors into the local variety of English. Similarly, students could rewrite excerpts from texts written by local authors that contain nativised English features into SBE. Testing students on their understanding of nativised Englishes alongside SBE/AmE will help develop linguistic resources, didactic materials and teaching strategies that are appropriate for different postcolonial contexts. This approach will ensure that each variety of English develops local norms of identity and proficiency.

Teaching materials should not only reflect the specificities of local contexts but also expose learners to both IC and nativised varieties of English. Learners need to be exposed to “authentic materials from different varieties of English in the world” including “literatures in world Englishes [...] international news in English from TV and radio using national broadcasters from different countries [...] material from the internet or from a CD ROM which offers examples of written and spoken texts from world Englishes” (Smith, 2016, p.16).

English teachers’ education programs should feature at least one course, at each level, that addresses issues of variation and the multilingual practices of learners both in formal and informal communicative situations. Smith (ibid) elaborates on how teaching and teacher training can address the need to reflect the polymorphous nature of English in these words:

The perspective on teaching and teacher training from world Englishes suggests that teachers need to be aware of how often, with whom and for what purposes English is being learnt by students. Teachers must be able to help their students use English successfully with those people. [...] Teachers should not neglect helping their students learn to successfully interact with North Americans and Europeans but they will also assist them in understanding that conventions of communication and negotiation differ across cultures [...]. Teacher training (at the pre-service and in-service levels) needs to include learning about the rapid developments in formal English education that is taking place in countries all over the world (p.15).

For all this to make sense, the codification of English in local contexts must have been completed. Bamgbose (1998) argues that codification is probably the most important factor here because, without it, an innovation continues to be viewed as an error. He writes:

The importance of codification is too obvious to be belaboured [...]. One of the major factors militating against the emergence of endonormative standards in non-native Englishes is precisely the dearth of codification. Obviously, once a usage or innovation

enters the dictionary as correct and acceptable usage, its status as a regular form is assured. (p.4)

Scholars studying PNE in Africa have recognised the need for a standardised approach to English pronunciation and understood their task to produce grammar books, dictionaries and other reference materials. Since the late 1990s, they have proposed standard accents of English for their respective countries. Notable examples include the Ghanaian English Pronunciation Standard (Koranteng, 2006 and Ofori, 2012 cited in Ofori et al. 2014), the Standard Accent of Kenyan English (Ragutu, 1993), Educated Nigerian English phonology (Olajide & Olaniyi, 2013) and CamE pronunciation (Simo Bobda, 1994). In various postcolonial contexts, it is clear that the responsibility, now, rests with policy makers who, it seems, are not in a hurry to embrace these changes.

## Conclusion

Attitudes towards postcolonial nativised Englishes have changed over time, shifting from an outright rejection in IC settings to a more tolerant stance in their home contexts, largely influenced by the Kachruvian movement. While these Englishes seek acceptance and possible adoption as local standards, they still encounter aversion and contempt both in IC contexts, and at times, in their home countries. Additionally, a revitalised ELF movement highlights the ongoing robust push against the use of nativised English features in the classroom. This resistance is not surprising; on one hand, embracing nativised English features may not align with the interests of the ELT industries in IC contexts. On the other hand, governments in postcolonial contexts often choose to prioritise SBE as the model for the classroom as a way to demonstrate their commitment to providing quality education to their citizens (Jenkins, 2015b). Nevertheless, the implications of accepting PNE are largely positive for local contexts. Firstly, these Englishes gain overt prestige and recognition in their respective contexts as legitimate tools serving communication needs in education, the workplace and the media. Secondly, adopting more inclusive language teaching ideologies and reducing the reliance on didactic materials and experts from IC contexts contribute to the development of context-appropriate teaching methodologies and pedagogical resources that enhance knowledge dissemination and learning. Third, PNE could provide financial advantages to local ELT industries, boosting their expertise in textbook production and commercialisation, standards and certification. As PNE continue to develop their own norms and pursue their growth

towards differentiation, policymakers in multilingual polities are urged to acknowledge this reality in their planning while classroom teachers need to incorporate it into their research interests and lesson contents. We can only hope that scholars' advocacy for flexible language policies –that incorporate features of local Englishes in the English language classroom in postcolonial multilingual contexts— (Aboh, 2023; Ofori et al., 2014; Ngefac, 2011; Njoroge & Nyamasyo, 2008) will be considered by their governments. As postcolonial Englishes move towards or beyond endonormativity, policymakers are expected to redefine their roles from promoters and guardians of SBE norms to champions of the gradual incorporation of nativised English features into the English curricula. They must equally become supervisors of language standardisation and pedagogical engineering projects that seek a better representation of local English in ELT theory and practice. Taking this slippery path is a huge risk for governments. Yet, it equally is a bold political stance. In my eyes, it has, just as Garcia (2019) said about translanguaging, “the potential to decolonize our conception of language” (p.162).

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